

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6285

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 10876

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ECON, ID

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S STATE ADDRESS-COMMENTS ON POLITICAL ISSUES

REF: JAKARTA 10748

1. PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S 1976 STATE ADDRESS (SUMMARIZED REFTEL) CONSTITUTED STRONG DEFENSE OF NEW ORDER IN CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR'S SPEECH WHICH HINTED THAT PRESIDENT WAS TRYING TO BUILD LINKS WITH SOME ASPECTS OF SUKARNO PERIOD. IN AN ELECTION TIME WHEN SUHARTO IS SUPPOSED TO BE UNDER ATTACK FROM PRO-NATIONALIST ELEMENTS, HIS DEFENSE OF NEW ORDER AND OBVIOUS REJECTION OF SUKARNO PERIOD SHOWS SOME DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE AND POLITICAL COURAGE. PRESIDENT SYSTEMATICALLY REFUTED VARIOUS CRITICISMS AND RUMORS WHICH HAVE ACCUMULATED DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, OBVIOUSLY HAVING IN MIND CHARGES BY B.M. DIAH IN MERDEKA IN JANUARY THAT GOI FOREIGN POLICY HAS CAUSED INDONESIA TO BE ISOLATED IN WORLD COMMUNITY, THAT LOANS FROM WESTERN NATIONS HAVE TILTED GOI
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POLICY UNDULY TOWARD THE WEST, AND THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS

NOT REACHING ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY. EMPHASIS ON IMPORTANCE OF ADHERING STRONGLY TO PRINCIPLES OF CONSTITUTIONALITY IS CONSISTENT WITH SEVERAL PREVIOUS SUHARTO STATEMENTS. HE STRESSED THIS THEME IN TALK WITH GROUP OF AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN SIX MONTHS AGO.

2. PRESIDENT FRANKLY FACED PROBLEMS OF CORRUPTION WITHIN CIVIL SERVICE, SMUGGLING, MARCOTICS, AND OSTENTATIOUS LIVING BY SENIOR OFFICIALS, BUT QUESTION OF PROFITEERING BY THOSE IN HIGH PLACES WAS NOT RAISED. ALSO LEFT UNANSWERED WERE INCREASING RUMORS CONCERNING FINANCIAL DEALINGS BY MEMBERS OF SUHARTO'S FAMILY. SPEECH SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT "IF YOU GET RICH, JUST DON'T SHOW IT OFF".

3. STATEMENT OF INTENT TO RESOLVE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL DETAINEES AFTER 1977 ELECTION IS HELPFUL AS PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT OF POLICY, CONFIRMING WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD FROM ADMIRAL SUDOMO AND OTHER. NO FIXED COMMITMENT TO TIMETABLE OR NUMBER OF RELEASES WAS MENTIONED, AND THERE WAS NO VISIBLE REACTION FROM AUDIENCE AT THIS POINT IN SPEECH.

4. SPEECH MADE ONLY MINIMUM NECESSARY GESTURES TO NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND, IN CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR, THERE WAS RELATIVELY LITTLE NON-ALIGNED RHETORIC. POLITICAL RHETORIC FLOWED FREELY, HOWEVER, AS INTEGRATION OF EAST TIMOR WAS DISCUSSED. INTEGRATION TIMETABLE HAD BEEN AIMED AT ALLOWING PRESIDENT TO OFFICIALLY PROCLAIM INTEGRATION IN THIS SPEECH. SECTION ON MILITARY WAS ABOUT AS BRIEF AND INSIGNIFICANT AS POSSIBLE IF QUESTION IS TO BE MENTIONED AT ALL, BUT PRESIDENT DID INCLUDE REFERENCES IN TIMOR SECTION TO THOSE WHO FELL IN EAST TIMOR FIGHTING. THIS PRESUMABLY INCLUDED (BUT DID NOT DIRECTLY MENTION) INDONESIAN VOLUNTEERS. LACK OF PUBLIC RECOGNITION FOR VOLUNTEERS HAS BEEN SORE SPOT IN LOCAL MILITARY CIRCLES.

5. SPEECH RECEIVED WIDEST COVERAGE IN PRESS WITH MOST PAPERS CARRYING FULL TEXT, SOME IN SPECIAL SEPARATE SECTION. HEADLINES REFLECTED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SPEECH BUT MOST MENTIONED CALL FOR NON-VIOLENT ELECTIONS.

6 COMMENT: PRESIDENT, IN HIS LAST STATE ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT BEFORE ELECTIONS, HAD CHOICE OF PANDERING TO CRITICS OR SPEAKING

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DIRECTLY AND FRANKLY TO ISSUES. TO HIS CREDIT, HE CHOSE LATTER COURSE. HIS DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTION PROCESSES MAY NOT BE OURS, BUT HIS DEFENSE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT, HIS EXPLANATION OF FOREIGN AID, HIS COMMENTS ON DETAINEES, AND HIS EXPRESSED AWARENESS OF AT LEAST PART OF CORRUPTION ISSUE ARE WELCOME SIGNS OF FACING UP TO SOME OF INDONESIA'S KEY PROBLEMS. NEWSOM

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